# Livid: The Kanzler Saga

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cover image by Jennifer Kanzler
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**#1114**

Someone's all mastery against death,
shoveled back from a grave onto South
Street, so loose, germane I'm breathless—
the heady end of a drunken drought.
Right. But take that twenty years further,
the drought is more profound, years pile
up, stasis asserts its presence, as does murder,
as does the intrusion of the common, the vile.
Correct. At the end of the tunnel, either
choose to continue or no, as though it's another
misnomer this means anything, deeper
as it is in time past, time lost, time under.
It was so very real— all colors, thunder.
I'm lost in the funhouse of finder's, keepers.

**#1347**

Because women who paint have two bodies,
the fragile blood/flesh vessel common, normed,
to all, & an aggregate of coalesced colors & forms,
extending residue useful to raise brains past models,
the winter day arose I plumbed the depths (for a random
reason) of my files, found a miracle, ten paintings,
all master class, by her, without understanding how
I'd mislaid them a decade before. But there, in that now,
I found her body again, the first stroked into
the second, & it was a revelation past anything but

the most violently revelatory intercourse possible
between two human beings. Honestly, not hostile
but real, our more literal expression had wobbled
on skittish rails towards the noncommittal or gossamer.
But as she left it for real, her physical body, in coalesced
colors & forms, the retrieval was all intercourse elevated
into matrimony usually thought too good for the human
race. It is, actually. Especially given the work's twists
& turns towards revealing again all this dullness
we live in. Four bodies must suffice, to turn dullness to fullness.

**#1181**

Just as you couldn't paint but to vandalize, I had
the instinct to vandalize you, my love. To rough
you up. Because for you there could be no love,
I would assist you in understanding repercussions
could follow from games you thought were fun.
How your green eyes had a problem— you stared
at things too long. That wide-eyed stare, made it
so that (for example) no one could take you seriously
as swish at a first night. Or on First Fridays, as you
tried to swish towards a homing sense you were going
where you wanted to, your simian male friend at your
side. As I said, I wanted to rough you up. You could
never paint to be crisp, only smudged, so that Abby laughed
at how hard you worked to convey retardation (and succeeded).

I could never decide if, behind the wide-eyed stare,
what was there had any genuine innocence. It seemed
to me, to be honest, there was none. Your sense
of complete calculatedness in every respect is why,
how I now kneel before you, my round browns mingling
with your round greens, brown & green smudging each
other to determine advantages, now that the first nights,
First Fridays are all part of a distant past, the time's come
to choose whether to live or die. I've decided to salvage
us. That's crisp in me. You were crisp about the bed
part of it, for a while, so that I force red into your mix—

**#2040**

Where metaphors become themselves, put
the pedal to the metal, I want to be the one
not riding bitch on the plush-lined vessel's
back seat, so that I generate (from tension!)
new metaphors also putting their pedal to the metal,
& the car I'm speaking of is Noah's Ark, I'm the one
that got everything in there— it would have to be,
because she chose to paint kids playing King of the Hill,
because our brains did King of the Hill games back
& forth, years after all the fucking was finished,

because calculation was not foreign to the situation
on her side, so that I carry the all, the everything she is,
rich, recondite, multifariously about intelligence
or retardation, depending on her mood, green eyes
knowing the me past me that she's counting on,
the Ark having to be a car to stunt it, in her wonted
fashion, perhaps even a jalopy. She knows me past me,
is herself a man, a king, past what was between her legs,
which I thought I found interesting past calculation,
because she set up a game there I'd fall for, & I did—

**#1348**

Stumbling, like an inverted Dadaist, down the road
towards logical absurdity, eternity takes acid rain form,
drops a question in your path. So, seeds being sown,
women painters have two bodies, as has been normed,
ascertained fully. Right? But that the body left of
coalesced colors & forms should be a woman's body—
why? Who's left to determine that this should be
the case, or how it is the case, or what right should be
given to anyone to make such distinction? Why it is
that a woman should create a second woman— the "I"

which created it (her) being seen to be indecipherable, if
the work holds fast— there is no recourse to anything
but urinals, bicycle wheels, shades of international blue.
More stumbling. Surely every worthy human eye recreates
the body as fully as is that eye's capacity, gender penned
in as each image is seen, differently every time. What the event
is, no, but what the thing is in-itself, becomes conditioned,
created & recreated, hung on myriad perception missions
as it is, if it's real, & holds fast to some agreeable center against
also agreed upon obsolescence. Stumbles, an inverted Dadaist, bends.

## #665

Is it pure rapacity, that part of me
I set aside to dance when the scene
is a dance scene? It's not pure anything,
she said, it's dirty (we have matching
guilts for our beds), if you mishandle me
I'll make sure you pay a price. I looked
into her eyes, hands in hers— alright, she
said, I've got your moves. If it is to be
dancing, let's do it with complete cognizance
that just as we know art about sex, we
know sex about art— that's what this is,

she said, sex about art. I could paint you
a picture of what happened next, except
I forgot, in all the impasto, to record
the composition the right way. Let's hope
somewhere she left the right kind of drawing—
if it's all in her innards, so much the better.

**#1344**

Close to God as two libertines could cop—
Powelton Village, huge high ceiling co-op,
us, there, making love as though it were normal,
which it was not, not the breezy ease of it,
around the chaise lounge, not the wholesome
rolling. They would make us pay, they did,
what we would get would come to us slowly,
or not at all, as we ourselves came fast, that time,
I remember, jump-started by the sudden heat
after a cold walk, your insides salivating at expressing
that much creature comfort at once, against all
the stuntedness you usually expressed, me dressed,
still, mostly. It would be the layaway plan for us,
for the art, the sweet part. This part, this crescendo
memory would have to suffice in itself to redeem all the winter
nights with no heat, no love, no romance, no sex—
you better believe it, it's blessed & hexed—

**#1349**

What the test was, no one needs to know.
But the test was administered, with extreme
unction towards it being proven to her, shown,
I could be relied upon to hold my own,
in circumstances tempting me to loosen a hold
on reality, which could withstand sacrifice.
Thus, it, I, would be able to carry images where I
would need to take them. Our bodies the vehicle,
she was masterful. The tension was fake— treacle.
She laid it on thick. Just in the nick of time, I
dissevered the bond. The just war was then fit.
The joke is that the marriage consummation is this.
This, here, now, all flesh bonds dissevered, into
the Platonism of the fleshliness of images,
this, where what's born into being, colors mixed
purely, all serves to further tensions released, clean.

**#1474**

If you make it, once, to an isle in the water,
assuming the presence of a worthy she or her,
what two bodies can do becomes the issue,
whether you can join a continuum, with she or her,
of what the lake, leaves, shore-sand and the rest
participate in by their existence, hyperreal, the best
continuum two human beings can join, were
you to mean it as much, take umbrage with death,

overlay yourselves on a menagerie of elements
beyond your comprehension. Maybe, then, if you
make it, your life becomes testimony to something
more than ritual dances; a realm of no shyness,
in which your body was, once, what it was meant
to be; in the final count, the only way we're meant.

**#1475**

The term which bloomed in my addled
head, *pure peace profound*, as the tableaux
completed itself, I'd read in an esoteric
text. There it was, *pure peace profound*, yet
it would take twenty much more icy years
to understand why & how Hannah could
act as such a tonic to a largely niggling
universe. In doing so, the Goddess she
was, addled herself with agendas, away
from anything holy, led my body to a safe

haven for the rest of my life. A sense, also,
how *pure peace profound* means more than momentary
levitation. It means not merely the water-isle
occupied, but the conscience-stung cessation
of shallow-water dances— dancers in shallow
waters, also, conscience-stung, if they won't
vacate the isle at a convenient time— God
or godliness stung, if it's a moralizing God—
deep water, endlessly replenished within itself,
just because two-who-were-one were precisely that—

**#1362**

The nights that were ours,
were what they were. Not
too many. Violent. Violent
about disguises worn, violent
about mystifications, also about
a deep desire you had (I was only
too eager to fulfill) to be decimated,
to be ripped to shreds. I will not
now play wizard, pretend to know
what must remain unknown. But I
see it again— Bethesda— as we
both knew it. Charnel ground it
was, where the individual counted
for less than nothing. Games, more
games. Space, friction, pushes
towards decimation, obliteration
of both of us. The ride you wanted
is the ride you got. Two livid bodies
caught on something much larger
than themselves. Climaxes completely
calamitous. Or constipated ones.
Whatever. You had arrows to shoot,
too. My hands gripped your ass as
you rode me, to make sure we both
died completely. The world as friction.

**#1183**

See the isle in the water, as you would, as a syndrome,
sold as something solid to aspire to— however an "I"
might be in a "you," mostly illusion, tomfoolery to think
it really could be actual, that "I" in "you" communes
with celestial spheres, sprinkles on celestial seasonings.
Mostly grist for aggravating mills, against the actual.

I tend to think, in retrospect, this is why you could never
be earnest when you painted. Everything perversion,
warpage, distortion, nothing to explain why that urge,
towards the isle, was in you, as in so many others,
so that how you related to your body was conventional.
I, being a man, could make you a little girl, too.

The ride, through lake-water, to the isle, thus
forced, for you, such a sense of compartmentalization,
mere pain, as I imagine, does not begin to describe it.
Yet the journey had to be made. Even as it was,
placed in your soul & brain where it could never be
expressed. It would languish forever as privatized.
Even as, also, Nature's eyes must have seen you clearly,

made real, built the way a woman is, privatized, only partially—

**#1177**

Eyes of women who paint
grow bulbous with desire
when they light upon things
that strike them in profile;
they want them restyled
in color, to encompass their
contours, stroke slowly into
them, watch, watch, watch,

until the seen things settle into
their grasp like marble gods,
not recondite, represented finally,
finished off by fingers, put
into organically organized places,
perspectives rhythmic around—

## #1352 (Poem in Two Parts)

I.
What's in what eyes?
What I see in hers is
mixed greenish silence,
somewhat garish,
past girlish (not much),
but I can't touch her
flesh (set to self-destruct),
anymore than she can
understand the book
her cunt is, that no one
reads directly, or speaks
of, there's no love other
than "could be," but I
think of her throat cut—
that's her slice of smut.

II.
Then, there was this—
the creepy sense that it
had all been nothing
to her (everything being
nothing, no one being
anyone, nothing being
anything), & that she
had her own set of
spiders (exquisite or
not) to cast out into
the world to do her
bidding, so that betrayal
was never far from her
blood-rotted, starvation-
besotted, pistol-plotted
mind. And so it was.
That slightly nauseous
green, her paint insignia,
was in her aura, too,
so that blooms of youth
became lands of the dead,
& her domain was as
much visionary deadness
as mine, yet ready to do
real, nauseous, disastrous
evil in the world. I don't know why.

**#1353**

It can't be real— or, you
can't be real to them— not
a real guy, girl, artist, seer,
visionary, shaman, quester,
requester, you can't be anything
at all— all because what they
build, they build only that they
might tear down— now, I take
back & play backwards all that
happened between us, because
it seems to me that's what you
would want, like what music
sounds like played in reverse,
spooky, woozy, semi-anti-sublime,
not earnest, right? Us, just us. Backwards.

**#1360**

Another zinger to recover from—
it's all tangles. I can't write about
you with any limpid clarity at all.
At the hinge I could be limpid,
impediments block me on all sides
from proceeding. The only point
of true limpidity is that the discovery
of ten stray-yet-astonishing paintings
in my files, with only me to present
them to the world, left me in a quandary
where you had to be dealt with all over
again, from now (a surprising now we
might not have considered then), & promptly.

The tangles of who you were, who we were,
things I thought would be minor turning
major on me, & vice versa, can only resolve
in the idea that I was as conjugal with you
as a man could be. The Earth has never
seen an Eve as uproariously perverse as you
were then. Briefly. And with something to lose.
But the surprising now dictates that this
I have, words, are yours, yours forever, green
taken from your eyes, canvases, seeded
straight up, in earnest, which you weren't. Agreed?

**#1361**

You can take for granted: if I
have my way, the ride you wanted
is the ride you'll get. This is the stint
where you earn your keep by doing,
creating something indispensable.
Where, also, it must be admitted
(no way out) that some people
are special over others. As the pigs
of the world wince, I notice that
your work is full of tricks, daring
viewers (even serious ones) to take
things lightly. But here it's coloration,
here it's composition, here it's killer
narrativity: always a reason which
justifies the idea that you're always
more earnest than you look. I, too,
am learning. The child in you,
the septuagenarian— indispensable.
Your paintings are entire brains in a row,
also toddler's heads lined up to show
off how the world smudged you. So.

**#1350**

The bitter mystery moment of love— all that
tossing, turning, rocking, rolling, hypersensitivity,
painful tenderness, grievous jealousy, beginnings,
how it shapes up at the start— even the ecstasy,
the exuberance of it— passes swiftly. Someone has
burrowed beneath your flesh, remained there. That's
it— the bitter mystery. The mystery is more profound,
how given a durational expanse, all the rollicking sounds
beget what they beget. What it meant to be you, what it
meant for you to assimilate the Other (as the Other's own
mystery can only emerge in stern, slow-burn time), what
the illusions, equations, conjunctions were, also what
of it remains densely woven, like the deep wood's woven
shade, enough to last, thus wear a white crown of radiance—


**#1660**

The miracle of it, or the proven heft of it which moves
us with or to the right sense of cosmic tininess—
*dancing silver sandalled on the sea*— that is, reflecting
(being) starlight on the surface of a vast, cohesive being,
well past human comprehension, which reflects
back to human consciousness infinity, eternity,
boundlessness, spaciousness to an extreme degree—
in that sense of just being a reflection, tininess
moves in, makes the important score against
self-importance, ourselves— *dancing silver sandalled*
*on the sea*— I cannot not make an apostrophe to
you, that all the cohesiveness, eternity, infinity
denied to us, in halves, quarters, even less, is now
paid back to us in sea. We wade into the waves, are free.

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